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A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF MODERN SPIRITISM.

KINTEREST in Spiritism is constantly growing, and it is well that the moral and physical dangers which attend some of the experiments should be fully understood and recognized.

We therefore hail with gratification Mr. J. Godfrey Raupert's newest contribution to the subject, which has just appeared under the title of 'Modern Spiritism. A Critical Examination of its Phenomena, Character, and Teaching, in the Light of the Known Facts.'*)

In the first chapter Mr. Raupert, who is a zealous and scholarly convert to the Catholic faith, presents "the evidence;" that is to say, he shows by the testimony of eminent and thoroughly reliable authorities, that there is no longer any doubt that, in the presence of certain peculiarly constituted individuals, and under certain well-defined conditions, a series of abnormal phenomena can be induced, which can not be accounted for by the known laws of nature; that many of these phenomena are objective in character and directed by extraneous intelligence, and that that intelligence is frequently one apart from and independent of the intelligence of any person or persons assisting at the experiment (p. 22).

These objective phenomena are:

1. The movement of heavy bodies with contact, but without mechanical exertion. This phenomenon takes place when a number of persons gather together for a "séance" and place their hands upon a light table around which they are seated. It is generally ushered in by a sensation, on the part of the investigators,

*) London, Sands & Co.; St. Louis, B. Herder. 248 pages. Price, net \$1.35.

of a current of cold air passing over their heads. When the mysterious force is fully developed, three or four strong adults, deliberately exercising all their physical strength, may be wholly unable to control it. Under favorable circumstances, a ponderous dining-room table, on which many heavy objects have been placed, may rise up bodily into the air and remain suspended for some seconds, gradually resuming its normal position.

2. The phenomena of percussive and other allied sounds. Table taps often become not only loud and very distinct, but distinctly intelligent in character,—a means, in fact, by which questions put by the investigator can be answered and by which information, in some instances wholly unknown to any person present, can be conveyed.

3. The alteration of the weight of bodies. This phenomenon has been scientifically tested and its reality established by Sir William Crookes.

4. Movements of heavy substances, when at a distance from the medium.

5. The rising of tables and chairs off the ground, without contact with any person. Heavy objects and pieces of furniture, such as pianos and dining-room side-boards, are thus shifted or floated with the greatest ease, chairs with persons seated upon them are lifted to the ceiling and lowered again to the ground.

6. The levitation of human beings. Mr. Home, for example, was raised completely from the floor of the room in more than one hundred recorded instances.

7. Movements of various small articles, without contact with any person. Photographs or small ornaments are seen to change their places, and articles kept in another room have been brought through closed doors and deposited at a spot previously indicated. Many such remarkable instances of apport and of matter passing through matter, have been observed under the strictest possible test conditions, and Mr. Raupert has himself witnessed an instance of this kind under circumstances precluding the possibility of deception.

8. Luminous appearances, or "spirit lights"—phenomena which take place in the dark. The light is unlike any other kind of light of which modern science has any knowledge. "The phenomenon resembles perhaps most closely that exhibited by the movements of a number of large glow-worms on a dark and still summer's night. If a dark room be imagined, with a multitude of these wonderful little creatures readily passing from point to point, now exhibiting the light, now obscuring it, occasionally settling upon an object and remaining stationary, and then again moving

on, a fairly accurate impression will be obtained of the character of this very extraordinary phenomenon" (p. 37).

9. In some instances the appearance of these lights is followed by other similar manifestations in the shape of a luminous hand, the outlines of a luminous face, head, or body. In some cases, the light would appear to become solid, an audible sound being produced upon its coming in contact with any hard substance. The important point is that these "spirit lights" are unquestionably controlled and directed by independent intelligences. They will flash out intelligent answers to questions put by a pre-arranged code of signals, etc.

10. Direct writing, a technical term in contradistinction to automatic or planchette writing. It is frequently obtained in the presence of developed mediums. Mr. Raupert has obtained it in fairly good light, the sitters being more than a foot distant from the table, and remaining throughout the experiment under constant mutual observation. It appeared on paper previously marked and initialed, written with a pencil, in a regular and orderly way. The writing is sometimes marvelously beautiful, is executed with almost impossible speed, and the communications conveyed are often of a highly intelligent and apt character, directly bearing upon the purpose for which the experiment is made.

11. Phantom forms and faces. This is what is called "materialization." The phenomenon is obtained in the presence of a sensitive medium of exceptional power and "development," while in a condition of sleep trance or insensibility. Hands manifestly not belonging to any person in the room, or the dim outlines of faces or human forms, become visible and gradually gain in solidity and clearness. In some instances the entire form, enveloped in what would seem to be a kind of light drapery, is fully and immediately "materialized," moves about the room, speaks to the sitters in an audible whisper, and after a time, melts away before their eyes, like a large wax doll, a white cloud of vapor remaining finally visible for a moment or two on the floor through which it would seem to pass. Under favorable conditions these forms may have the characteristics of real human beings, with all the functions of the human body. In some instances the forms are known to have remained materialized for a considerable time, to have apported flowers and other light articles, to have carried on prolonged and interesting conversations, and to have acted in other respects like ordinary human beings, operating in an ordinary human body. Sometimes they will bring with them a luminous kind of substance about the size of an egg, which they will pass over form and features, imparting to them a peculiar diaphanous brilliancy, apt to produce a very striking

effect in a dark room. These apparitions usually occur only in the dark, but trustworthy accounts are to hand which give particulars of materializations having been obtained in the broad daylight. Mr. Raupert declares, from his own personal experience and the testimony of eminent authorities, that the independence and objectivity of these forms is beyond all reasonable doubt.

The universal testimony of these materialized beings is that they are spirits of departed men and women, some of whom have learned the art of manipulating the delicate matter abstracted from the organism of a sensitive (medium), and of shaping it into bodies resembling those of their past earth life, and that they do this for the purpose of giving evidence that they have survived the shock of death and are able, under favorable conditions, to enter once more into communion with the living. They further declare that this process of materialization is an exceedingly difficult and complex one, requiring much patience and experience on their own part and entire co-operation, in the shape of passivity, on the part of the medium. This explanation Mr. Raupert finds to be entirely in keeping with the circumstances which have been found to attend the development of these peculiar phenomena (p. 52.)

To these objective phenomena must be added three, which may aptly be called subjective, because the operations are here carried on from within, the mind of the medium being controlled and influenced in such a manner as to become the means of conveying, in a natural and automatic way, independent spirit communications. These subjective phenomena are classed by our author as follows :

1. Planchette and automatic writing ;
2. Clairvoyance and clairsaudience ;
3. Trance oratory and speaking with tongues.

While these phenomena may, in a large measure, be accounted for by a development of natural faculties, all experienced occultists agree that this does not cover the whole ground and that, occasionally at least, knowledge is conveyed and information given which could not, by any possible stretch of the imagination, have been normally acquired, or been absorbed by either the conscious, or what is called the subconscious, mind of the medium.

How are we to account for all these strange phenomena?

There are two theories : the spiritistic and the subliminal mind theory. The latter may be briefly stated thus : There is in the mind of man, besides the ordinary and known processes of thought, etc., an inner, secondary, and vastly more complex process of mental operation incessantly at work. It is in large measure distinct from and independent of the normal one, and in healthy

minds only occasionally gives indication of its presence. By means of this secondary mental process, a system of mind registry is unceasingly in progress, which embraces the whole of our complex lives, including anything and everything that has ever come within the sphere of our conscious or unconscious self. In abnormal conditions of the mind, such as artificial sleep, hypnosis, the trance state, this secondary mental faculty, ordinarily dormant, begins to work, displaying not only a vast amount of independent knowledge and information, but also the power of weaving and constructing that knowledge into a consistent whole, and drawing from it conclusions in some instances wholly at variance with those drawn from the same facts by the normal waking mind. How and to what extent these two processes of thought and mind operation act upon each other, it is impossible to say. Certain it is that the "subliminal reservoir" is ordinarily under control of the supraliminal mind and wells over only when, for some reason or other, the powers of the ordinary waking mind are rendered inactive and the will is held in abeyance.

The subliminal consciousness has, it is asserted by some modern psychologists, the tendency or characteristic, under certain abnormal conditions, to pose as an entity wholly distinct and separate from the normal self, and by casting the knowledge at its disposal into dramatic form, to play the part of an extraneous and outside intelligence. It may even, under exceptionally favorable circumstances, come in telepathic contact with the minds of persons in psychical affinity or rapport with it, and may abstract from those minds, or perhaps passively receive from them, information which it may manipulate in its own peculiar way and for the purpose of completing its personation of a deceased human being.

Mr. Raupert does not examine this theory in detail, but contents himself with showing that, while it may explain many of the strange things referred to above, it is wholly inadequate to account for the physical and objective phenomena the occurrence of which is now universally admitted. Moreover, it does not cover the phenomena by means of which information is conveyed, or knowledge displayed, which could not possibly be within reach of the minds of the medium or the sitters, and the correctness of which is only ascertained upon subsequent enquiry. From the moral point of view there is this grave difficulty, that such a power as claimed for the subliminal mind would manifestly introduce the most terrible complications into our moral and social life and would lead to a state of confusion and anarchy. Add to this the curious circumstance that the communicating intelligences almost always claim to be those of de-

parted persons. Can the subliminal self, while replete with information normally gathered, be supposed to be under a permanent chronic and profound delusion as to its own identity?

The spiritistic theory, in the narrower and conventional sense, holds the intelligences that manifest themselves to be the souls of departed human persons.

To disprove *this* assumption is really the chief purpose of Mr. Raupert in the present book. We can only skip over his arguments briefly. They must be read in full to be duly appreciated.

The spiritistic theory has the advantage of simplicity. It may further be urged in its favor that, at first sight, it would seem to explain all the phenomena and to cover the whole ground. But, on the other hand, there are many strong arguments against it.

1. There is the difficulty, if not impossibility, of satisfactorily establishing identity.

2. There is the known love of personation on the part of the manifesting intelligences.

3. Again, there is the general moral character of the manifesting intelligences. There is scarcely an investigator who has not a story to tell of cunning and crafty deception, of the exhibition of deliberate falsehood and prevarication, and of the display of heartless and wanton cruelty. Mr. Raupert asserts, on the strength of a mass of first-class evidence, that the spirits, masquerading under the guise of every virtue, are keenly intent upon working the moral and physical ruin of their victims. Spiritistic literature abounds with exhibitions of moral perverseness on the part of the "intelligences." From prolonged observation the writer is inclined to think that their real aim is the desire to gain control of the sensitized or medium, and that such control is frequently effected. Surely the delicate mission of enlightening and instructing a doubting world with regard to the life beyond, and of opening up communication with it, can not have been entrusted to intelligences who, at the very best, can be shown in nine cases out of ten, to be of a low moral order and bent upon deceiving us. It stands to reason that the habitual cultivation of mind-passivity, now so increasingly prevalent in connection with spiritistic experiments, may, in the course of time, become a source of the gravest mental and moral danger, and that it is not at all improbable that the cause of many of those more obscure mental aberrations and delusions which have so long puzzled psychologists and helped to fill our insane asylums, must be sought for in this direction.

4. As a fourth objection must be urged the general effect of spiritistic practices upon the sensitive and the investigators. Mr. Raupert quotes the testimony of the husband of a noted American

trance medium (p. 179) to the effect that the inculcation of no doctrines in this country has ever shown such disastrous moral and social results as the spiritistic theories; and that of another authority: that Spiritism, in a very large class of minds, tends to beget a kind of moral and religious atheism.

5. A fifth and perhaps the strongest argument against the spiritistic theory, is the contradictory character of the teaching given by the "intelligences." One must read the facts and testimonies quoted by our author to realize how grotesquely absurd and contradictory these communications are on all subjects. The theory indeed, utterly breaks down when fully and fairly tested by its own evidence.

Mr. Raupert clinches the argument against Spiritism by showing, from its own teaching, that it denies the divinity of Christ and contradicts the teaching of the Catholic Church on His life and doctrines, the institution of the priesthood, eternal retribution, and many other essential doctrines of revelation. Whatever else the "spirit creed" may be, it is utterly and wholly incompatible with, and indeed manifestly antagonistic to, the teaching of Holy Scripture and the traditional creed of Christendom.

Mr. Raupert, while he does not attempt to work out a theory of his own, is evidently a spiritist in the sense that he believes that these intelligences are spirits,—not spirits of departed men, but evil spirits, who are permitted by God to tempt and mislead men of little or no faith and loose morals in these piping days of "modernism," which, as P. Weiss, O. P., so convincingly shows in his latest remarkable book†), is nothing but the deification of man.

†) Die religiöse Gefahr. Von Albert Maria Weiss, O. Pr.—B. Herder, Freiburg and St. Louis. 1904. Price \$1.60. A book of absorbing interest, which no student of the religious movements of to-day can afford to be without.



—According to a *Globe-Democrat* special from Mobile, Ala., dated July 4th, a conflict has there arisen between a civil court and the Freemasons. Pending in the circuit court is the case of R. W. Stoutz vs. Adam Glass, wherein the complainant claims damages in the sum of \$50,000. The suit is the outcome of Glass preferring charges against Stoutz in a Masonic lodge. The defendant was served with a number of interrogatories bearing upon the trial at the lodge, all of which he refused to answer. An appeal was made to the court and an order issued by Judge W. Sanderson, that defendant must answer the questions or be committed for contempt.

If our judges were not so many of them Freemasons themselves, such conflicts would arise much more frequently than they do, opening the eyes of the people to the danger of Masonry to civil society.

NEW HOPE IN FRANCE.*)

For centuries the lot of France has been intimately linked with that of the Church. Since 1870, the trials of both have not ceased. Apparently each blow struck by the Revolution against the one inflicted a wound also upon the other. Has not the absence of will-power, the diminution of truth, the disappearance of character in France affected the clergy and the faithful of the whole Church? But energetic character rests on powerful convictions, and convictions are strengthened by blunt assertion of principles. In France, with its brightness of mind and its love of simple truth, the Church will gain more souls by a firm profession of her principles, than by prudent and subtle concessions. And the souls thus gained will be ardent, energetic souls, full of conviction and ready to make great sacrifices; I might even say, eager to face dangers and to suffer losses. Twenty or thirty years of Masonic rule have not entirely changed the temperament of our race. There are still emulators of our old-time heroes, soldiers of La Rochejaquelein and Zouaves of Charette; they appear in our colonies and wherever else circumstances furnish an occasion for the noblest qualities of our race to show themselves. The reason why this energy and heroism remains latent and inactive at home in the mother country, is because modern life is calculated to snuff out every manifestation of virility. All our institutions and social forces, all the collective and individual influences to which we are subject, conspire to bind an active man in the narrow bonds of every-day conventionalities and petty interests. Many a soul suffers from this restraint and cries out for a little more air and a little more room to assail the enemy vigorously and cheerfully. The simple and firm attitude of Pius X., as we have sketched it in our previous paper, will separate the two hostile camps. As long as they intermingled, a great decisive battle was impossible; but once separated, they may measure arms and begin the fight in earnest. The decisive hour will be the rupture of the Concordat, which is manifestly not far off. After the crisis is past and ruins are heaped up in France, the Church will be stronger and freer. Such is the hope of Pius X., and it is shared by many good Frenchmen, who, when the storm is over, will not wish for a renewal of the Concordat of 1801. One century of administrative oppression and hypocritical tyranny has shown us sufficiently how the enemies of the Church can abuse such a contract.

The social and religious restoration that followed the Revolution

*] Continuation of the paper on "Pius X. and France" by the same distinguished author, in No. 25 of THE REVIEW.

took place under most adverse conditions, whence have resulted all the disturbances of the past century. Napoleon, whose administrative, legislative, religious, and social activity has survived that of all other modern governments, re-made French society; not by rejecting but by organizing and disciplining the Revolution. Now, Revolution is the evil, the pestiferous principle of political and religious society, the work of Freemasonry that, by this frightful cataclysm began the annihilation not yet completed of Catholic nations and the destruction of the Church.

The infernal genius of Napoleon Bonaparte succeeded in constructing upon the revolutionary principles a certain transitory social order, destined to train new generations for the work of destruction. But he was no more a new Constantine than he was a new St. Louis.

Present-day French society, which is of Napoleonic origin, may be compared to a man whose limbs are broken and badly reset by an inexperienced surgeon. He lives, but can make no movement without pain. His bones must be broken anew and reset properly by a deft hand. The operation is painful, but absolutely necessary to restore the patient's good health. The Jacobins and Socialists, who wish to revive the Revolution, are ready to begin this operation, which we would not have the courage to undertake on a patient so dear to us as our poor country. It therefore becomes the duty of all good Frenchmen and true Catholics to hinder them in their nefarious undertaking and ourselves to proceed with God's help, to recreate a France that is really France, i. e., the most Christian of nations. But this will be possible only if we repudiate all revolutionary principles, ideas, and institutions. None of the generations which preceded us would have been able to carry out this program. But the rising generation seems to be prepared to break with the traditions of 1789.

I do not wish to appear too confident. The evil is immense, and the symptoms of an intellectual revival which I wish to point out, are but in their inception. But it can not be denied that our brightest minds in France are in the way of ridding themselves of the revolutionary utopias more radically than has been the case at any time in the past one hundred years.

Circumstances strongly favor this effort of the French mind, for the authorized representatives of the Republican party in power are demonstrating the iniquity of these revolutionary principles by pushing them to their last consequences.

We have to-day quite a number of clever and influential writers, such as Paul Bourget, Charles Maurras, Henri Vaugeois, Léon de Montesquion, who are engaged in the war of extermination against the principles of 1789, and who distinguish themselves by

their scientific method and the literary and philosophic power with which they clothe their arguments. If their influence has not yet reached the masses, it at least strongly touches the élite and wins over many men of renown and writers of great talent. Thus Jules Lemaitre and Edouard Drumont have already for some time published articles clearly inspired by the school under discussion.

The recognized organ of this school is *L'Action française*, a bi-weekly review, devoted exclusively to the defense of the nationalist idea in its full extension. Its principal characteristic is that it is royalist, not through respect for inherited rights, but by virtue of scientifically proved conclusions and the necessity of the national interests. Its champions—all young men, all Republicans by education and sentiment, (some are even of revolutionary ancestry), have, by the impartial and methodic study of the conditions essential to the maintenance of the French nationality, arrived at these conclusions by themselves.

This school may be said to be Catholic in a sense: not exactly by faith—some of its most prominent representatives being Positivists and atheists—but in the sense that it recognizes the public practice and social profession of the Catholic religion as an integral part of the national life of France. Thus even non-Christians entertain juster notions of the rights of the Church and the necessity of professing the Catholic faith, than most of the Catholics who sit in our parliament. Of this fact one recent proof deserves to be pointed out: Whilst the splendid protest of Count Boni de Castellane, in the Chamber of Deputies, against the proposed voyage of President Loubet to Rome, was not applauded by most of the Catholic representatives, the Positivists of *L'Action française* brought him an ovation.

Whilst the most prominent representatives of the Catholic party, the association specially founded for the defence of the Church, exhaust themselves in proclaiming that the Church demands only the *droit commun*; whilst some even go so far as to ask equal privileges for all; the Positivists of the *Action Française*, in the name of the national interests, maintain that the Catholic religion must have a privileged place in France, and that the nation as such must make public profession of the Catholic faith.

That I quote these opinions favorably does not mean, as you will understand, that I find them irreproachable; this way of looking upon the Catholic religion purely as an institution of national necessity; of performing in public certain outward acts of religion, remaining inwardly infidel all the while—resembles rather the manner in which Cicero honored the gods of ancient Rome; and it certainly can not satisfy a truly Christian heart.

What I wish to show is the pleasure I feel in seeing certain eminent minds renounce the liberal thesis of the religious neutrality of the State—a renunciation based upon the scientific study of the natural laws of human society. I rejoice at this new movement, which will aid us in upsetting the utopia of Liberalism. And I hope that the example of these men, whom the light of reason, or rather common sense, has led away from Liberalism, will encourage Catholics to battle unwaveringly for the sacred rights of truth. When the teachings of our holy faith are added to the demonstrations of science, both proclaiming aloud that society, like the individual man, is bound to practice the true religion; will courage then fail us to profess publicly the Catholic doctrine and to condemn what the Syllabus condemns?

TOURNAY, BELGIUM.

CHARLES MAIGNEN.



MINOR TOPICS.

Imperialism "Rampant et Roarant."—The recent order of the Secretary of State as to the official title of our ambassadors and consuls abroad, is as astounding as it is revolutionary. Can the name of our country be changed by the stroke of the pen of a cabinet minister? "To sink the United States in the official title of the diplomatic service"—says a writer in an Eastern daily—"is to pave the way for the same change in every department of the government."

Evidently the Constitution of the United States may no more be invoked to restrain the power of the newly risen nation. If we are no longer a federation of States, we shall soon be what enthusiasts have indeed already styled us—a "Republican Empire," or plainly an empire, and one to which neither a continent nor a hemisphere may set bounds.

The history of the United States is brought to a close in the year 1904, by order of Mr. John Hay, under Roosevelt, and that of "America" begins. Let the strains of that stolen air, the so-called national anthem, resound, and patriotism and loyalty accommodate themselves as best they may.

"This alteration"—says the *Pilot* (lxvii, 27)—"is not unlikely to be resented by some citizens of the United States as an unwarranted liberty with the ancient and well-established style of their great country. The word 'American' is not used once in the Constitution. There they have not 'American citizen' nor 'American Congress,' but 'citizen of the United States,' 'Congress of the United States.' Hence, it is doubtful if even an act of the federal legislature would suffice to fix in the law of the country such a change as Mr. Hay has inaugurated. Any litigious person could appeal to the Supreme Court against a proceeding under

the seal of an 'American Consulate' or a treaty bearing the stamp of an 'American Embassy,' and might succeed in having such transaction declared invalid, whether the word 'American' were authorized by statute or merely ordered by a member of the cabinet.

"Besides the sticklers for constitutional form, traditional practice, and historical continuity, there can not but be objectors among our neighbors of the United States. There are other American countries, and though Canada is not one that wishes to be confused or obscured under any continental appellation, yet her people do not like to see the title of the whole hemisphere arrogated by the United States. The appropriation of the word 'American' by any one power has a tendency to magnify that power at the expense of the others. That consideration might commend the adoption of the word to the United States' foreign secretary. The word would seem to put into the name of this country the vinctulum of the Monroe doctrine. It is as improper and misleading for the United States to denominate itself 'America' as it would be for the Republic of France to call itself 'Europe.' "

The Responsibility for the Growth and Influence of "Yellow Journalism" lies largely with those who are at heart opposed to sensationalism, but can not withstand the persuasive power of a good big check. Our readers know what we think of Catholic prelates contributing to newspapers of the Hearst kidney, and will no doubt read with interest the following extract from an article in the *Independent* (June 9th) on Hearst's candidacy for the nomination for the presidency:—

Some time ago a young writer applied to Mr. Hearst for employment on his New York newspaper, and was engaged to fill a position which would become vacant at the end of a week, but in the interval the fact came to the attention of a university professor who had always taken an interest in the young man's advancement.

"I am sorry," said the good man, "that you should have chosen that particular school of journalism for your professional start." And he proceeded to descant upon the responsibility a journalist owed to society, the influence of one educated youth's example upon others of his class, the tone a writer inevitably took from the character of the journals he worked for, etc. "And your untarnished sense of self-respect, my young friend," he concluded, "will be worth more to you, when you reach my time of life, than all the salaries an unprincipled employer can pour into your purse."

So impressed was the neophyte with this lecture in morals that he called upon Mr. Hearst the next morning and announced that he had changed his mind about accepting the proffered position. The editor scanned his face shrewdly, and then enquired the reason. After much hesitancy the young man told him the whole story and started to leave.

"Ah!" said Mr. Hearst. "Be seated a moment, please." And turning to his secretary, he added: "Write a letter at once to Professor X. Y., present my compliments, and say that I should be pleased to receive from him a signed article of five hundred words—subject and treatment to be of his own choosing—for the

editorial page of next Sunday's paper. Inclose check for \$250."

"Now," he remarked, with a cynical smile, as he bade his caller good-by, "you can see for yourself what comes of that."

He did. The Sunday issue contained a signed article, which gave the paper the reflection of a good man's fame, and spread the influence of his example among other university professors, and—did what to his self-respect?—all at the net rate of fifty cents per word!

Are the American People Degenerating?—Dr. Charles Cuthbert Hall, President of Union Theological Seminary, in an address before members and friends of the Religious Educational Association in New York, said among other things (v. New York *Evening Post*, May 19th):

"We all rejoice in the remarkable growth and the excellent features of American civilization, and we are pleased at the relatively good state of the common morality of the people; but a deeper examination of the social side of our American life reveals a situation that causes anything but satisfaction. It is a matter of consternation and deep concern to us that the moral standard of American life is deteriorating. In the hustle and bustle of every-day activity we have astonished the world, but morally we are rapidly going astern—so rapidly that one is dumfounded at the contrast after a visit to some of the countries of the Old World. I am an optimist through and through, but I am not a stone-blind optimist. I feel, and I know from observation, that religion has little if any part in our American civilization to-day. This is a lamentable state of affairs, and it behooves each and all of us to do all we can to help to stem this tide of indifference. Our home life is not what it should be, and it is not to be wondered at when we realize the general apathy of the people as regards their spiritual welfare."



—On page 88 of the current "Year-Book" of the "Catholic University of America," we read in a note:

"At the meeting of the Board of Trustees held April 17th, 1904, it was decided that the University offer courses of studies leading to the baccalaureate degree, open to graduates of high-schools, academies, and others of like scholastic attainments. It was hoped that the preparations for this work would be completed in time to begin it in October, 1904, as stated in the public press and in circulars issued by the University. This hope has not been realized, and the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees has ordered that only such courses as fall within the existing resources and equipment of the University be offered at present."

Why was the ill-advised plan given up? The "Year-Book" does not give us the true reason. The *Western Watchman* (xvii, 30) a few weeks ago betrayed the secret. The project, it declared, had been "disapproved" by the Holy Father, who notified Cardinal Gibbons that the University will "have to be maintained on the same level in which his predecessor had placed it," and continue to "limit its courses to purely post-graduate studies." The reasons given for the veto are twofold:

the University "would suffer diminution of cast and dignity by opening its doors to undergraduates," and "there being many other Catholic colleges in the United States which Rome wished to foster, the Pope did not desire established in the University an unfair rivalry and compromising situation."

—We read in the Dubuque *Catholic Tribune* (No. 284):

"The Knights of Columbus had the front of the stage again for the last few weeks. Some one heard it whispered that Cardinal Satolli was coming to America to find out whether the valiant plumed fighters were a Catholic organization. Then a 'prominent' knight of Rockford, Ill., surprised the world by announcing that Msgr. Satolli had come all the way from Rome merely to 'join' the knights and get the forty-eight millionth degree of chivalry and original (very original, in fact) knighthood. All these rumors were bad enough, but Mayor Sears of Sioux City, Iowa, capped the climax by addressing the Iowa Grand Lodge of Freemasons and declaring that he was of the opinion that the Knights of Columbus were going to be the means of 'bridging the abyss between the Roman Church and the innocent order of Freemasons.' And then followed a storm of 'explanations' that filled the columns of the dailies. The Masons 'explained' that the Catholic Church was all wrong if it did oppose the American Freemasons, and the good knights 'explained' that there was no connection whatsoever between the K. of C. and the real original Masons with horns and hoofs. At the time of our writing the 'explanations' are still on. Our advice to earnest Catholics is to become members of societies that need not 'explain' so much."

—"It is a just criticism of our college and convent graduates," says the *Church Progress* (xxvii, 12)—"that they abstain from active participation in all affairs of a Catholic character. Their actions reflect no credit upon them. What is worse, they are placing the Catholic institutions which trained them in a false light before the world. Hence justice to themselves, to their preceptors, and to their Alma Mater demand a correction of this condition."

Is this statement not too broad? Have we not a considerable number of college and convent graduates who take an active interest in Catholic affairs and prove themselves worthy of their Alma Mater? We believe the editor of the *Church Progress* himself is a Catholic college graduate. Surely he would not admit that his actions "reflect no credit" upon the institution which gave him his higher training.

In *this* sense, we readily allow, the charge is true: that our college and convent graduates are not all doing their duty; that, as a body, they are not as important and active a factor in public life as they ought to be.

—Prof. George L. Scherger, like numerous writers before him, assures us in his lately published book 'The Evolution of Modern Liberty' (New York: Longmans, Green & Co.), that individual liberty was not recognized in the ancient State. The more we learn of the institutions of early times, the more clearly

we see that the rights of individuals, implied in customs, always have existed. Nor is evidence lacking that in theory the absolute right of rulers was denied. The 'Antigone' of Sophocles contains the truth concerning liberty, ancient or modern; the truth that what may be called indifferently the law of God, or natural law, or the supremacy of conscience, is above the power of government. Rulers may be able to exile, to torture, to put to death subjects who refuse to obey their commands. But when men are commanded to do what they think is wrong, the best of them, ancients or moderns, have replied that they must do what they think is right, and governments have usually been wise enough to give a tacit recognition to this principle.

—The *Champlain Educator* (xxiii, 6) protests against a class of animal stories which has lately become popular: "Looking at such literature from an educational standpoint, little can be said in its favor. The attempt to humanize animals by exaggerating the qualities they possess or by attributing to them an intelligence that alone belongs to human beings is to attempt to break down the barrier that separates man from the lower animals, to confuse reason with mere animal instinct, and so introduce an element into popular literature as dangerous as it is false to nature. It is one thing to relate anecdotes of the doings of animals fairly within the limits of their own order of intelligence,^{*)} but quite another to depict them as acting with the deliberation, thought and purpose which only belongs to rational beings. No amount of idealizing will ever make them human or raise them one bit above the brute creation."

—The philosophical faculty of the University of Berlin has decided to discontinue the "doctor disputation" altogether, and, by the abrogation of this ceremony, has put an end to a venerable academic custom inherited from the scholastic Middle Ages. In former times such disputations were a part of the regular program in the doctor promotions of all the faculties, and the new graduate was compelled to defend his theses in Latin against any opponent who might put in his appearance. In more recent times the Latin language had been abolished, and the disputation consisted in a debate pre-arranged with some friendly critic and was little more than a formality.

—The Fourth Annual Convention of the American Federation of Catholic Societies will take place in Detroit, Mich., August 2d, 3d, and 4th, 1904. All organizations wishing representation should secure credential blanks from the National Secretary, Mr. Anthony Matré, 612 East Pearl Street, Cincinnati, Ohio, not later than July 28th. Parish representation is especially desired, so as to bring in the whole Catholic body, and every clergyman in the United States is invited and requested to appoint one or more delegates to represent his parish, and, if possible, to attend himself.

^{*)} The *Champlain Educator* and our Catholic press generally could do much towards destroying the current false conception if they would avoid the term "intelligence" in connection with the brute creation. Animals have a soul, but no intellect, and therefore no intelligence.—A. P.

—According to a “general summary” printed on page 23 of its “Official Year-Book” for 1904-1905, the “Catholic University of America” had in the past year one hundred and ten (110) students, most of them inmates of the so-called “affiliated institutions”: St. Thomas College (Paulists,) the Marist College, Holy Cross College (Fathers of the Holy Cross), St. Austin’s College (Sulpicians), etc. The number of officers and teachers being fifty-one, the University now has a little more than two students to each officer and instructor, which, we must allow, denotes a degree of progress.

—The Paulist Fathers have elected a new superior-general in the person of Rev. George M. Searle, a convert to the faith and author of ‘Plain Facts for Fair Minds,’ a good book, of which we are pleased to hear that it “has reached a circulation of more than half a million copies,” though we can not help adding the wish that it may be cleansed of the few blemishes which Rev. Father J. F. Meifuss pointed out in its pages, in a REVIEW criticism about a year ago.

—We notice (*Church Progress*, xxvii, 12) that Archbishop Quigley is advocating a great Catholic university for Chicago. What a pity the ancient University of St. Mary of the Lake was suffered to go under! If it had been sustained, the hybrid at Washington yclept “The Catholic University of America” (as if the U. S. were America and as if there were no other Catholic university on the continent!) would probably have never been founded.

—The *Church Progress* (xxvii, 12) prints in its “household” column some “Friday Menus,” in which we find these items:

“Omelet with Chopped Meat,” “Roast Chicken,” “Minced Beef on Toast.”

Can it be that every prepaid subscriber to the *Church Progress* gets with his receipt a dispensation absolving him from the law of Friday abstinence?

—At the recent congress of the National Educational Association, held here in St. Louis, secret fraternities in high-schools were criticised very severely by G. B. Morrison, who claimed, rightly no doubt, that these societies serve to disorganize and make selfish the members belonging to them.

—The “Christian Scientists” dislike to be called “Mothered-dytes,” but it is as just and significant an appellation as Lutherans or Wesleyites.



